



AST GARMISCH  
FAMILY ADVOCACY  
PROGRAM

CINDY KNOLL  
DSN: 442-2584  
CIV: 759584

EMAIL:  
CINDY.KNOLL@  
CMTYMAIL.6ASG.ARMY.  
MIL

APRIL 2001  
CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH  
FAMILY ADVOCACY PROGRAM

## HOW SAFE ARE YOUR CHILDREN?

Garmisch is a wonderful place for children. We feel our children are safe, because of security measures and the closeness of the community. But living in "Paradise" can lead us to letting down our guard. Whether you live in Breitenau or Grainau, below are some safety tips every parent should discuss with their child.

- Though well meaning, the advice "Don't talk to strangers" is not sufficient. Abusers of most children are someone they already know be it a family friend, a neighbor, a babysitter, a coach - even a family member. Pedophiles are notoriously personable with children and will go out of their way to put a child at ease. Even a complete stranger who engages a youngster in friendly conversation can quickly become someone that child "knows."
- Avoid scare tactics. Explain that most adults would never do anything to hurt a child, and that those who prey on children are the exception.
- Teach your child basic sex education, i.e. the areas of the body covered by a bathing suit are private. Molesters admit that a child's innocent curiosity and/or ignorance make that child easier to abuse.
- Establish that sexual advances from adults are against the law. This gives children the confidence to assert themselves with adults who seek to abuse them.
- Do not instruct children to "Give Uncle Jimmy a kiss" or "Give Aunt Susan a hug." Allow children to express affection on their own terms.
- Develop strong communication skills with your children. Explain the importance of reporting abuse to you or another trusted adult.
- Stress that there should be no secrets from you, especially those involving another adult.
- Know your children's friends and their families.
- Volunteer to chaperone extracurricular activities like Boy Scouts and sporting events, especially those involving overnight trips.
- Do not rely entirely on "The Buddy System." While it may make children (and parents) feel safer, its effectiveness is questionable. In many instances, sisters, brothers and playmates have been raped, abducted and even murdered when together.
- Make a commitment to spend more time with your child; the lonely and attention-starved child is an easy target.
- Instruct children to never get in a car or go with anyone, unless you have given him or her direct permission.
- Above all, both encourage children to recognize, trust and follow their instincts, and also listen to your own instincts. If a situation or person makes you or your child uneasy, believe in your feelings and act on them.
- Make your child familiar with the common lures used by child molesters and abductors, such as use of a pet or faking an emergency.